



City of Deer Park, Ohio

The City of DEER PARK DISPATCH

"The Right Town for a Bright Future"

Winter 2011

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Longtime Deer Park resident Dan Lehane sworn in as Councilman



Mayor Dave Collins (left) swears in new Councilman Dan Lehane (right).

Dan Lehane grew up in Deer Park, and has long been involved in the community. He's been on the zoning board, was a volunteer fireman and part-time police department dispatcher.

In January, he took on a new role: City Council member. Dan was officially sworn into office Jan. 3 to represent Ward 3. He was appointed to replace former Councilman Mike Allen who retired.

Dan works in the Sycamore Township Maintenance Department. He's lived in Deer Park for 45 years, is married and has three children. He and his family attended Deer Park Schools.

Dan said he's still learning the ropes



as a council member, but wants to bring more businesses to the city.

"I want to be able to help bring in new businesses, and to get them going. I also want to continue to improve (Chamberlin) Park. I grew up in that park and when we were young we'd stay there all day," he remembered. ♦

Tax Time Q&A With the tax season upon us, the following are frequently asked questions:

Q. When is the Deer Park income tax return (or extension) due?

A. In observance of Emancipation Day the deadline has been extended this year. The Deer Park return (and Extension Requests) are now due on or before April 18, 2011.

Q. Who has to file a city return?

A. Anyone who lives in the City of Deer Park and has an earned wage (W-2 income), 1099, operates a business in the city, owns rental property, or conducts business in the city. If you moved out of the city during the year, you must still file for the number of months you were here. This includes all apartment residents/tenants.

Q. What is taxable income?

A. Wages reported on a W-2 (usually amount in Box 5,) some 1099's, bonuses, commissions, fees, sick pay, property rentals, and all other compensation for work done or services performed.

Q. What is non-taxable income?

A. Some military pay, intangibles such as interest, dividends, life insurance benefits, pensions, capital gains, workers' compensation and unemployment.

Q. How much credit paid to other cities do we receive?

A. Our tax rate is 1.5%, but since we receive none of the money you pay to another city, we can only give you credit up to 1.5%. If you work in a 1% city you will owe Deer Park 1/2%, if you work in a 2% city, you can only take 1.5% credit.

Q. Do we have to file a Declaration of Estimated Taxes?

A. If your tax liability to Deer Park is more than \$100 per year, and your employer does not withhold the Deer Park portion for you, you must file and make quarterly payments.

Q. Do we need to request an extension to file or pay taxes?

A. If you file a federal extension you must also request that extension from us. We will accept a copy of the federal extension. We must have the extension on or before April 18, 2011. No extension will be granted because of lack of funds. If you are in a financial bind, stop in the tax office, file the return and set up a payment plan.

Q. Are there penalties for not filing the return or an extension by April 18, 2011?

A. Yes, there is a late filing fee of \$50. If the taxes are not paid by the due date there is a penalty of \$25 or up to 25% (whichever is greater) as well as interest. ♦

Reduce your Tax Time Stress with AARP free tax assistance at Sycamore Senior Center



For the third consecutive year, Sycamore Senior Center will team up with AARP to become an AARP Tax-Aide Site. Volunteers will be on hand every Wednesday in February and March, 2011 to assist with your tax return preparation.

AARP Tax-Aide is a free program run by the AARP Foundation to guide people with low to moderate incomes through their taxes, making sure they receive all the deductions and credits they're entitled to. It is also the nation's largest free, volunteer-run tax assistance and preparation service.

The program has grown tremendously since it started in 1968 with four volunteers. Approximately 34,600 AARP Tax-Aide volunteers, trained in cooperation with the Internal Revenue Service, now help more than 2.6 million taxpayers file their federal, state and local tax returns each year. The AARP Tax-Aide program is offered at approximately 6,500 locations nationwide in senior centers, libraries, community centers and other convenient locations.

Every Wednesday in February and March volunteers offer their services at the senior center between 9 a.m. and noon and 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. Appointments are mandatory, and can be made by calling Sycamore Senior Center at (513) 984-1234. Call soon, space is limited! ♦

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Is Policing Deer Park Dangerous?



I am often asked, "Is it dangerous to be a cop in Deer Park?" My answer is that it's about "average" compared to other places. Average; the word doesn't have much impact does it? Let's put it into context. The cold-blooded, line of duty murder of Deputy Suzanne Hopper in Clark County was "average."

According to the "Summary of Officers Killed 2010," the average officer killed in the line of duty was 41 years old, Suzanne was 40. The average officer killed in the line of duty had 12 years experience, Suzanne had been with Clark County for 12 years. The average officer killed in 2010 left behind two children. Suzanne left behind two children, Emily 19 and Charlie

13. But Suzanne's death, and the danger she and your Deer Park officers face every day, is anything but average.

Following a two-year decline, law enforcement fatalities have spiked to 162, an increase of 40%. Firearm fatalities increased 24%, with an alarming number of multiple officer fatality shootings. How do these national statistics relate to Deer Park? It isn't always the big cities that are the most dangerous. The cops in LA or New York know what they're getting into and plan accordingly. SWAT officers expect trouble and gear up for it. In the quiet suburbs and in small towns like Deer Park or Clark County, officers never know when their usual-

ly quiet existence will be shattered with violence. They have to guard against complacency and routine. (By the way, we hate it when the media refers to the "routine traffic stop," there is no such thing.)

So we train – and train – and condition ourselves to be ready for the day we face a man like Michael Ferryman, the murderer of Deputy Hopper. This is something that you as a citizen need to think about too. As the shootings of a congresswoman, an innocent 9-year-old-girl and others in Tucson, and countless other acts of violence show, you never know when or where evil and violence will visit. Yet everyone always seems surprised by it.

So what's to be done? There are no easy answers and it is not my intention to stir a political rant or place blame. The intention of this article was to promote thought, and to get people to think outside their "safety bubble." That's the first step toward being prepared. Gather information, talk to us at the police department, and decide for yourselves what the best course of action and preparedness is for your family. But please think about it, action is always better than reaction.

--Lt. Dan McCormick

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From the Fire District: Don't bury or block fire hydrants with snow



Did you know there are almost 200 fire hydrants in Deer Park? These hydrants, though not used often, are extremely important in providing an ample supply of water to fight a fire.

Fires occur even when there's snow on the ground; lives and property are in jeopardy until firefighters can control a blaze. To do that, we need water, which we access through the fire hydrants located throughout the city. But we must be able to find them, and that can be a problem when it snows. That's because when many businesses and residents plow their driveways, perhaps unknowingly, they block or hide the hydrants.

This can cause a real problem for you and your neighbors in times of emergency. Searching for a hydrant and then clearing the snow away can cost firefighters time they should be spending

fighting the fire, and can have disastrous consequences. Precious time is wasted while firefighters find and shovel snow away from hydrants during working fires.

So please don't let your hydrant hide from firefighters! When the snow covers fire hydrants, firefighters and their shovels receive quite a workout. With almost 200 of them, we could use a helping hand. If you see a fire hydrant that is covered or blocked by snow and ice, please take the time to shovel the snow away from it. Or, call your local fire department and report the location so arrangements can be made to correct this possible deadly problem. If



you elect to remove snow from a hydrant, you should try to clear the snow down to the ground for about a 3-foot radius.

Help us protect your property as well as your neighbor's property by keeping hydrants clear! ♦

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Annual Deer Park High School Cakewalk is Feb. 26



The annual Deer Park High School Cakewalk, a community favorite presented by the Deer Park Band Sponsors, is back. This year's Cakewalk is Feb. 26 from 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the DPHS gymnasium. Grand Raffle tickets are \$1 each or six for \$5. For more information, go to www.deerparkbands.com.

The Cakewalk is an annual fundraiser that the band sponsors have been hosting for over 50 years. The support of the community with this event has grown each year, and the enthusiasm and anticipation of this event is unlike most. See you there! ♦

City Council is taking a proactive approach to attracting business, residents with new incentives

As one of Cincinnati's older, First Ring Suburbs, Deer Park continually must look at innovative ways to attract businesses and residents. Those of us who have long lived and worked here have pride in our community, but we can't be complacent with our present circumstances if we want to have a vibrant future.

City Council currently is working on two initiatives we believe will keep Deer Park economically competitive with our neighbors and encourage residents to move here and improve existing homes.

First, Council is considering creating a Community Improvement Corporation. This is a non-profit corporation, allowed by state law, which encourages economic development projects. The CIC is comprised

of a mix of city and school officials, residents and members of the business community. CICs generally have between five and nine trustees and serves as an economic development arm of the city. This will allow a wide variety of input on the city's economic development efforts.

Several area communities already have their own CICs, including Silverton, St. Bernard, Cincinnati and Loveland. These nonprofits can buy, sell and lease property, issue bonds for acquiring or improving properties and insure first mortgages on business properties. The purpose of the CIC is to attract new businesses to the city, retain existing business and improve the quality of life for our residents.

Secondly, Council is also in the process of approving a Community

Reinvestment Area program that can help city business owners and residents. A CRA is also a state program that would allow property owners, who meet certain criteria, to receive large tax exemptions on certain improvements to existing property or on new development.

Depending on the type of new improvement or development, tax exemptions could range from 50% to 100% for 10 to 15 years. We believe this is a considerable incentive for business owners and residents, which could spur economic development.

Council currently is discussing both these initiatives, which could be approved by mid-February. If you have any questions, call 513-794-8860.

--Mayor Collins ♦

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Mark your calendars for the 2011 Days in the Park Festival



Planning has already started for this year's Days in the Park festival. Mark your calendars for Aug. 5-7. Last year's expansion from two to three days proved so successful that we're doing it again. Look for more information in our next newsletter. 🍀



Door-to-Door brings together Deer Park housing, financing experts to answer questions, show homes

Join us each Saturday morning at 10:00 am for an informal opportunity to ask questions over coffee, bagels, and donuts about buying or selling a home in the area. Afterwards, you're invited to tour a few homes that are on the market in the Deer Park area.

Meet at
First Financial Bank
7200 Blue Ash Road
Deer Park

Hosted by Susan Welsh
and Donna Farrell

Please RSVP to susan_welsh@cbws.com
or 513-720-3644 (leave a message or text)

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Deer Park Door-to-Door
HOUSE TOUR

A group of Deer Park business professionals have come together to offer a unique free service to people looking to buy or refinance a home in Deer Park. Every Saturday morning residents can come to the lobby of First Financial Bank, 7200 Blue Ash Rd., for Deer Park Door-to-Door. They can speak with several professionals about various aspects of buying a home, from financing and taking out second mortgage to advice on what to look

for when examining the mechanics and structure of a home.

The event is informal and no-pressure say event co-hosts Donna Farrell and Susan Welsh. Farrell is Banking Center Manager at First Financial Bank and Welsh is a Realtor at Coldwell Banker West Shell who specializes in Deer Park properties. Also on hand are Bev Pineault, a Mortgage Officer with First Financial Bank and Jason Lapp, a House Inspector with National Property Inspectors.

At 11 a.m. Welsh will take anyone interested on a tour of three houses that are currently for sale in Deer Park. If you're interested in Door-to-Door RSVP to susan_welsh@cbws.com or leave a message or text at (513) 720-3644. Door-to-Door is also on Facebook. You can find it by typing Deer Park Door-to-Door in the Facebook search engine. 🍀

Things you should know:

- **Don't renew your Ohio driver license late:** If you wait too long to renew your Ohio driver's license and registration, it could cost you extra. A change in state law that went into effect on Oct. 1, 2009 requires the local BMV to charge you a \$20 late fee if you renew your license more than 7 days after your birthday. The late fee goes toward supporting the operations of the Ohio State Highway Patrol.
- **Stop on the mark to get going on Webster Ave:** Some drivers have had long waits at the stop light on Webster Ave. east toward Blue Ash Road. That's because the light operates on a sensor that your vehicle has to alert. Stop at the sign that says "STOP Here to Actuate Signal" and you will soon get a green light.



Business Spotlight: Cow Dog Design



Just over two years ago, Darrell Williams turned his job as a web designer for a small company into an entrepreneurial endeavor. In the fall of 2008, he started his own company Cow Dog Design, which he operates out of his Deer Park home.

Darrell specializes in building user-friendly, custom web sites for a host of small businesses and organizations in the Cincinnati area and beyond. He revamps out-of-date sites, incorporating new features and technology, but can also build them from scratch. Darrell's talents aren't limited to designing for the "big screen," he also develops readable, creative sites that are compatible with mobile devices.

He can develop sites that engage and pull in customers, including e-commerce sites that allow users to buy products and services from the web. Want a web site, but don't know where to start? Cow Dog Design can help craft an Internet

strategy as well.

"I like to talk to my clients about what they need, and why one approach is better than another. It's not just about what you like, but what is most useful (for customers and buyers)," he said. "Some small companies aren't always that tech savvy, and I like to walk them through that."

Darrell has designed web and mobile site for Perfect North Slopes in Southeast Indiana, Cincinnati's Quintessential Outdoor Living and Lawrenceburg Speedway.

But Darrell isn't all about work. He's currently raising funds for a four-day bike ride from Cleveland to Cincinnati for Push America, a nonprofit that supports people with disabilities.

You can find out more about Darrell's bike ride at www.pushamericachallenge.org. You can reach him or see some of his work at www.cowdogdesign.com. 🐕



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Deer Park City Council meets twice a month, on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Municipal Building, 7777 Blue Ash Rd.



Michael Schlie, Police Chief
791-8056
Donald H. Newman, Deer Park-Silverton Joint Fire District Chief
791-2500
Ann Poole, Tax Commissioner
794-8863

Dave Collins, Mayor
John Applegate, Auditor
Pat Ketteler, Treasurer
Jeff Vollman, Legal Counsel
Michael Berens, Safety-Service Director
Chris Brinkman, Service Department Foreman
Meredith George, Clerk of Council
The above officials can be reached at 794-8860

City Council

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Tony Proctor, At Large

Dan Lehane, Ward 3
Jeff Hall, Ward 2

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